The Orthodox Herald

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ST. BASIL OF CAESAREA

St. Basil of Caesarea is better known as St. Basil the Great. We usually hear his name in reference to the Divine Liturgy, which he composed and which is served ten times a year, among them the Sundays of Great Lent.

He was born around the year 330 into a large family of ten children. The family was not only large but very religious, numbering seven saints among its members: his grandmother Macrina the elder, his father Basil the elder, his mother Emmelia, his younger brother Gregory of Nyssa and his other brother Peter of Sebastea.

St. Basil was highly educated. He practiced law and taught rhetoric. He was a very strong Christian, and he decided to become a monk after visiting the chief monastic centers of the east. He lived in the monastic community for five years but he is considered the father of the Eastern communal life. The monastic life of the Orthodox Church is still based on the principles he laid down.

St. Basil is best known for his valued writings, his Divine Liturgy and for formulating a rule for the monastic life.

Controversies wracked his whole episcopate, intensified by his strictness and uncompromising attitude.

He died on January 1, 374, leaving an estate for the use of others which among other things contained a house, church, a hospital with a full staff of doctors, nurses and artisans. It was practically a new town.

The hymns written for him tell us much about him.

The Troparion to Saint Basil the Great,
sung in tone 1:

Thy fame has gone forth into all the

(Continued on Page 67, Col. 1)

JESUS AND THE WATER OF LIFE

One of the favorite themes of primitive Christian art is Moses striking the rock with his rod and causing water to gush out. The water-theme comes over and over again in the Old Testament, from the crossing of the Red Sea by Israel, to Isaiah's call: "Lo, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters..." (Isa. 55:1). The fulfillment of these passages of Scripture is to be found in the words of Our Lord reported in the Gospel: "Unless one is born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5); if anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me ... out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37, 38).

Water has become the sign of salvation. Our Lord commanded His disciples to baptize: "Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them..." (Matt. 28:19). He Himself inaugurated His public ministry by receiving the baptism of John. Eastern Fathers, chiefly St. Ignatius of Antioch, teach that the contact of our Lord's body with the water of Jordan is the principle of the sanctifying action of water in the holy mystery of Baptism.

The Orthodox Church surrounds the feast of the Baptism of Our Lord (Epiphany or Theophany) with a quite special veneration. In accordance with the ancient Christian tradition, she rates Epiphany above Christmas, which she regards as a comparatively private event. She also calls Epiphany the "Feast of the Jordan"; on that day she blesses water and gives it to the faithful to drink. The prayers of the Orthodox "Great Blessing of the Water" express a complete theology. The

(Continued on Page 67, Col. 1)

PRAYER AT BLESSING OF WATER

Here it is a cold winter evening, you've worked all day at a stressful job, you've hardly had time to get a bite to eat, you're hungry, you've had a hard time finding a suitable bottle and you've had to hurry to get to the church for the blessing of water on the big Holy Day of the Epiphany.

As the service progresses, you slowly calm down and start to listen, really listen, to the prayers. You hear this one and you think: how expressive, how beautiful! You decide to ask the priest for a copy of the prayer so that you can share it with others and take it home and study it. Here it is:

"Great art thou, O Lord, and marvelous are thy works: no words suffice to sing the praise of thy wonders.

For thou by thine own will hast brought all things out of nothingness into being: by thy power thou dost hold together the creation and by thy providence thou dost govern the world.

Of four elements hast thou compounded the creation: with four seasons hast thou crowned the circuit of the year.

All the spiritual powers tremble before thee.

The sun sings thy praises;

The moon glorifies thee;

The stars supplicate before thee;

The light obeys thee;

The deeps are afraid at thy presence;

The fountains are thy servants.

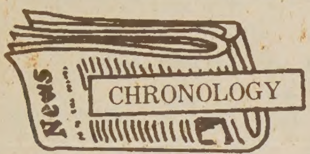
Thou hast stretched out the heavens like a curtain;

Thou hast established the earth upon the waters;

Thou hast walled about the sea

(Continued on Page 67, Col. 2)

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JANUARY 2009

DIED: Fr. Michael Sapaliga
Fr. David Sedor
Fr. Pavel Sawchak

THE EASTERN ORTHODOX FOUNDATION, PO Box 432, Indiana, PA 15701-0432 is in need of various supplies and monetary donations to better provide for residents in a personal care home – Cherryhill Manor. Call 724-349-4821 or 724-357-8480 for information.

IMMIGRATION HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER at the University of Minnesota offers financial aid to support graduate students and visiting scholars. FFI: http://www.ihrc.umn.edu/

EVERY JANUARY 22 THERE IS A MARCH FOR LIFE. The march is held to protest the Roe vs Wade decision to legalize abortion. Many organizations gather to march in Washington, DC. This includes the Orthodox of all jurisdictions. Many areas have a bus. Call your priest for more info.

PATRIARCH ALEXY II of Moscow died December 5, 2008 in Moscow. He took over stewardship of the Russian Orthodox Church in 19 during a significant time in its history. His funeral was held in the massive Christ the Saviour Cathedral with burial in the Epiphany Cathedral.

THE 8TH ANNUAL PRAYER SERVICE FOR THE UN was held at St. Vartan Armenian (COPTIC) Cathedral in NY. A Vesper service was held by members of SCOBA and SCOOCH. Attending were members of the clergy, ambassadors and dignitaries of the UN Diplomatic Corps as well as many attendees.

IOCC, PO BOX 630225, BALTIMORE, MD 21263-0225 has recently trained 40 Orthodox clergy in Critical Incident Stress Management, a form of trauma counseling and evaluation. American Red Cross often requests the IOCC to provide trauma counselors to help in shelters following a catastrophe.

THE SWORD is a self-published and funded magazine published twice annually by Mike Christopulos. For info contact: The Sword, 8515 N. 59th St., Brown Deer, WI 53223. Mr. Christopulos prints opinions on many Orthodox subjects that cannot be found anywhere else.

THE 2009 ST. HERMAN CALENDAR is dedicated to the Orthodox Church in Kosovo and Metohija. Orthodoxy has been at home in this area since the early 14th century. The Calendar carries scripture readings, fasting guidelines and the saints of the day along with much information on the Serbian Orthodox Church and its problems and restrictions. The 104-page calendar can be obtained for $9 plus 15% postage from www.sainthermanpress.com or St. Herman Press, PO Box 70, Platina, CA 96076.

THE BYZANTINE parishes of the Wilkes-Barre, PA area gather at the Susquehanna River on Epiphany to bless the water, asking for God's blessing on the city and entire valley, which is prone to flooding.

THE FIRST ALL-SOULS SATURDAY TAKES PLACE ON Saturday, February 21. Get your list of deceased ready.

CROSSROADS is a program for Orthodox High School juniors and seniors who spend 10 days, either from June 20-30 or July 7-17, in Boston to learn more about the Orthodox faith and how Christ and His Church fit into their lives. It is a full scholarship. You must pay your way to and from Boston. For info phone 617-850-1309 or www.crossroad.hchc.edu. Application deadline - March 1.

THE EASTERN ORTHODOX COMMITTEE ON SCOUTING has announced that it is accepting applications for scholarships from either Boy or Girl Scouts. Emphasis is on scholastic achievement. For info and application for 2009, write: EOCS Scholarship Chairman, 862 Guy Lombard Ave., Freeport, NY 11520.

THE CARPATHO-RUSYN SOCIETY NOW HAS A CHAPTER in Arizona. For info: contact Leslie Kurtak at rusynvatra@yahoo.com

THE GREATER CLEVELAND, OHIO AREA can serve as an example for others on pan-Orthodox cooperation. Three well-attended events are held each year. The first event is a Sunday of Orthodoxy service. A Holy Unction Service is held at the beginning of the Nativity Fast. In December, choirs of all Orthodox traditions hold a concert, followed by a fellowship hour.

METROPOLITAN NICHOLAS OF THE AMERICAN CARPATHO RUSSIAN DIOCESE was honored on the occasion of his 50th year of ordination in January. Hierarchs of the Greek and Ukrainian Orthodox churches were joined by those of the Ukrainian and Byzantine Catholic Churches.

THE EASTERN CHURCHES OF CONNECTICUT are sponsoring a short series of seminars. The lecturer is Robert John Klancko. There are 70+ Orthodox Eastern Christians in Connecticut. Of these, the largest group is the Orthodox 50+, the smallest is the Nestorians 1. For info: www.stn.stnicholasbridgeport.org

(Continued from front page)
ST. BASIL OF CAESAREA

earth, which has received thy word. Thereby thou hast taught the Faith; thou hast revealed the nature of created things; thou hast made a royal priesthood of the ordered life of men. Righteous Father Basil, intercede with Christ our God that our souls may be saved.

The Kontakion to Saint Basil the Great,
sung in tone 4:

Thou wast an unshaken foundation of the Church and didst give to all mortals an inviolate lordship which thou didst seal with thy doctrine, O righteous Basil, revealer of the mysteries of heaven.

(Continued from front page)
JESUS AND THE WATER OF LIFE

Orthodox Church associates the mystery of the Water with the mysteries of Light and illumination. Therefore, Epiphany is also called the "Feast of Lights". This last aspect is very important. It could rightly be said that Orthodox mysticism is a "Light-mysticism". The Greek notion of the "glory", and the Glory, as a luminous effulgence of God, as a manifestation of His indwelling or Presence (the rabbinic *Shekinah*), is a common property of both Jewish and Christian Greek mysticism.

Neither Hesychasm nor the Orthodox emphasis on Transfiguration and Resurrection can be understood if one fails to grasp the conceptions of *light* and *glory*, not only as spiritual realities but as visible phenomena. In the case of Baptism, the insistence on Light and illumination averts the danger of a sacramental water-materialism and proclaims that it is the spiritual Christ who is to be appreciated.

Contact with the Lord Jesus as the Baptizer as well as the very Water of Life is the starting point of our whole spiritual life.

From *Orthodox Spirituality*

(Continued from front page)
PRAYER AT BLESSING OF WATER

with sand.

Thou has poured forth the air that living things may breathe.

The angelic powers minister to thee; the choirs of archangels worship thee; the many-eyed cherubim and the six-winged seraphim, standing round thee and flying about thee, hide their faces in fear of thine unapproachable glory...

By the elements, by the angels and by men, by things visible and invisible, may thy most holy name be glorified, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

NEW YEAR'S

We live in a country that put a man on the moon, a lady was elected to the U.S. Senate and ran for president, where any boy or girl can win $1 million by correctly answering 15 multiple-choice questions on TV.

Surely, we can come up with a New Year tradition a bit more creative than drinking alcohol, watching football and making resolutions more inventive than losing weight and exercising. Believe it or not, New Year's Day was a big day in America even before the Rose Bowl. On New Year's in 1863, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. On New Year's Day in 1892 immigrants arrived at Ellis Island for the first time. Unfortunately, most New Year's traditions in this country are about as meaningful as the halftime show at the Orange Bowl. New Year has become like halloween for adults and the first day of the rest of your diet.

What are some of the traditions in other countries. They're different and intriguing.

In some villages in Egypt, fathers go from house to house wishing each family a Happy New Year collecting people as they go until they reach the mayor's house. Think of the impact (Happy New Year, Mr. Mayor, and as long as we're here, let's talk about the tax increase proposal of yours).

In Hungary, people parade and then set fire to an effigy known as "Jack Straw," who represents the evils and misfortunes of the past year.

In Russia, "Grandfather Frost" makes a visit.

Muslims begin their new year with prayers for peace and prosperity. Judaism's new year begins with 10 days of self-examination. OK. Those new years don't begin on January 1.

Orthodox Christians sing in their new year by celebrating St. Basil's Day on January 1. The Greeks have given Western civilization many things. Democracy. Logic. Epic poetry. The Hippocratic Oath. The first Olympics. Pi. Why not Basil the Great?

Basil, who lived in the 4th Century, was a man for all centuries. He defended religious liberty by standing up to the emperor's intervention in the church. During a famine, he distributed his inheritance to the poor. He instituted the practice of almsgiving. He opened the first non-ambulatory hospital and established the first orphanage.

As he lay dying on **January 1, 379,** Basil said, **"This is a day of beginnings, not of endings."**

For centuries, the dawning of another year has been celebrated as a day of new beginnings and spiritual renewal. We live in a country founded as the greatest new beginning of the history of the world.

Surely we can kick off each new year in America with something more inspiring than a kickoff.

In the meantime, **Happy St. Basil's Day.**

An icy epiphany



Russian Orthodox believers help Aleksandra, 11, get out of ice cold water after plunging her to mark Orthodox Epiphany in Sestroretsk, Russia. A cold snap coincided with the holiday, and many kept up an annual ritual by jumping into holes cut into thick ice on rivers and ponds to cleanse themselves with blessed water. The tradition imitates the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan. The temperature in Sestroretsk on this day reached minus 15 degrees Fahrenheit.

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Nina Stroyen, Editor

Memories

I have many fond memories of my younger years within my church family and especially all of the relationships that grew between my church friends and myself. Most of these friendships were carried on well into adulthood.

Beginning at ages of nine or ten and to about age thirteen or so, a number of the young people of our parish were required by our parents to attend summer Bible Class. The classes were held every Monday afternoon. They were scheduled to begin at 4 p.m. and conclude at about 5 or 5:15 p.m. They were held during the summer months and were taught by our priest, Fr. Peter Kohanik. Because I lived only a short block or so away from the church, I would usually be one of the first to arrive shortly before 3 p.m. each Monday. One by one, a number of girls would arrive during the next half hour, some walking to the church from nearby bus stops. It was safe to travel by bus from neighboring towns and to walk a few blocks to the church in those days. Many of the girls did that. Others were dropped off by their parents, by car.

By 3:15 p.m., eight or nine girls would be at the church. Two or three of us, having brought our jump ropes, would set up a quick, 45-minute game of double-dutch.

A few minutes before 4 p.m., we would see Fr. Peter walking down the block from the Rectory, which was 1 1/2 blocks from the church. We got in our last few rope jumps just as he approached us and we all went into the church basement which was a large room furnished with desks and seats, a large blackboard, etc.

We had each brought with us two or three sharp pencils and a notebook. After prayers, we were ready to begin. Father would begin dictating and we would start writing. He started the first lesson with the creation of the world and each week would progress to the stories of Adam and Eve, Cain, Abel and Seth, Noah and the flood, and so on. He didn't stop often for spelling, but we managed to read back what we had written. Needless to say, we didn't cover much each week in a few short summer months with this method. But, the next year we reviewed from the beginning and went on.

Classes lasted for just over an hour. Following closing prayers, we were dismissed. Fr. Peter left us at the church with our jump ropes and walked back up to the Rectory. After another 20 minutes or so of double-dutch, we all started to leave for home. Some left for their various bus stops and others were picked up by their rides. I walked the short block or so to my home. We all left looking forward to the next Monday lesson.

Helen Sutyak Rahnefeld

ST. BASIL'S BREAD (Vasilopita)

January 1, the Circumcision and Naming of Our Lord, is also the feast of St. Basil the Great, a fourth-century bishop of Caesarea (located in Central modern-day Turkey). After a brilliant classical education, Basil became a monk and wanted to remain one, but because of his holiness and learning was pressured to become the bishop of Caesarea.

Basil was a brilliant speaker and writer, and a strong defender of the faith against heresy. His book on the Holy Spirit became a classic. He also worked strenuously on behalf of the poor, feeding them during famine, and opening a free hospital for lepers.

One of the stories handed down about this truly great Basil was his care for the needy and the special sweet bread that he handed out to them. Knowing that the poor wanted to preserve their dignity, he gave coins to the women who made bread for the poor, and asked that they bake the coins right into the bread. This enabled Basil to give money to the poor without demeaning them.

It is the custom in Greek parishes today to have a cutting of the "Vasilopita" ("Basil's bread") on New Year's or in January. A coin is baked into one of the fancy breads. There is a special service for cutting the vasilopita, with prayers for health and blessing, and whoever finds it in their loaf will be specially blessed in the coming year.

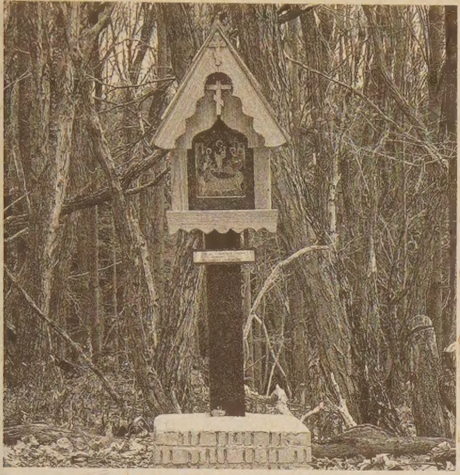
Fr. James L. Doyle

LIGHTER MOMENT

At a weekly seminar for husbands, the priest asked George, who in a couple of months was approaching his 50th wedding anniversary, to take a few minutes and reflect on his married life – how he had managed to stay happily married all those years. "Well, I tried to treat her nice, spent money on her, but, best of all, I took her to Europe for our 20th wedding anniversary." The priest responded, "George, you're an inspiration to all the husbands here! Please tell us what you are planning for your wife for your forthcoming 50th anniversary." George proudly replied, "I am gonna go back to Europe and bring her back!"

PASCHAL CYCLE
(Calendar for year 2009/7517)

Great Lent Begins	March 2
Pascha	April 19
Ascension	April 28
Pentecost	June 7
Western Easter	April 12



DEDICATION OF KIOT

St. Tikhon Monastery was organized over 100 years ago. There is much interesting history on and around these blessed grounds. A few of us had relatives who helped in its organization or used it for periods of govenie. Others lived here as orphans or on farms nearby and the monastery was their spiritual home. We hear stories about the monastery and are eager to learn more about it and to write down these facts before they disappear.

As our first project we researched facts about the church we heard had once stood in a spot about 1/2 mile from the present church. We checked the library, interviewed people and searched in a grove of trees. We found an old well, and the faint outline of the church. We decided to erect a kiot with an icon of the Dormition of the Mother of God on the spot identifying it. The church had been dedicated to this day.

One very cold Sunday morning, we gathered at the spot for the dedication of the kiot. The kiot had been made by George Walcho of Bedford, Ohio. It was erected by Hiermonk Gregory, who also officiated at the moleben. Following coffee hour, people came and sang the responses. Fr. Emil Hutynan brought the kiot from Ohio. Matushka Nina was coordinator, Deacon John Jones took the photos. All in all, it was a memorable day for many.

The kiot is located on a platz, which is historic. Several early saints worshipped here and it provides a quiet place for prayer and meditation. The platz has the blessed ikon in the kiot, and a bench on which to rest. When spring comes, it will be landscaped by Ed Wawruch, using plants which the animals will not eat. On to our next project!

OUR BAPTISM

The practice of baptism as a religious symbol did not begin with Jesus. Baptism, which means "immersion in water," was practiced among people in the Old Testament, as well as people who belonged to pagan religions.

However, in the Christian Church, the practice of baptism takes on a new and particular significance. It no longer remains merely a sign of moral change and spiritual rebirth. It very specifically becomes the act of a person's death and resurrection in and with Christ.

Baptism in the Church begins with the rejection of Satan and the acceptance of Christ. Before being baptized, a person serving as a godparent or sponsor has to proclaim the Creed – the Symbol of faith, signifying what they believe. If a child is being baptized and can't speak for themselves, a godparent speaks on their behalf, for this reason they must be Orthodox Christian for how else could they proclaim the Creed?

After the proclamation of faith, the water is prayed over and blessed. The person to be baptized is prayed over and blessed with sanctified oil. And then, after Alleluia (God be praised) is declared, the person is immersed three times in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Through the act of immersion, the person dies to the world and is born again in the resurrection of Christ into eternal life. They are then clothed with white garments called a krysma garment of salvation.

The words of Apostle Paul (Galatians 3:24) "For as many as have been baptized unto Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia" are chanted as a procession is made around the baptismal font symbolizing their procession into the Kingdom of God and entrance into eternal life. A cross is then put around our neck.

WINTER'S GRACE

A Prayer For Older Folks

"Lord, you know that I am growing older. Keep me from becoming too talkative, and particularly keep me from falling into the tiresome habit of expressing an opinion on every subject. Release me from the craving to straighten out everybody's affairs. Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details. Give me wings to get to the point.

"Give me grace, dear Lord, to listen to others describe their aches and pains. Help me to endure the boredom with patience and to keep my lips sealed, for my own aches and pains are increasing in number and intensity and the pleasure of discussing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by.

"Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I might be mistaken. Keep me reasonably sweet; I do not wish to be a saint (saints are so hard to live with), but a person both old and sour is the crowning work of the devil.

"Make me thoughtful, but not moody; helpful, but not pushy; independent, yet able to accept with graciousness, favours that others wish to bestow on me.

"Free me from the notion that simply because I have lived a long time, I am wiser than all who have not lived so long. If I do not approve of some of the changes that have taken place in recent years, give me the wisdom to keep my mouth shut.

"You know, Lord, that when the end comes, I would like to have a friend or two left."

– Annie Mouse

* * * * * *

Grief can take care of itself, but to get the full value of a joy you must have somebody to divide it with.

NEW YEAR

Dear God,

As we look back on this past year, we remember the people, the places, and the events that were a part of our lives.

We recall that there were difficult times and good times.

And we know that through all the days, even when we did not realize it, You were with us.

We thank You for Your loving presence and ask You to be with us still. Amen.

GETTING READY FOR HOUSE BLESSINGS. First, remember that the blessing of your home is a religious service. It should not be treated casually. Be ready by observing some of the following points: Turn off all TVs, radios, stereos, and computers, and have all in the house gather around the table where the service will be conducted. On the table, covered with a white cloth (if possible), have a candle, matches, an icon or cross and Holy Water. Put any pets in another room while the service is going on. Sing the tropar or festive hymn with the priest, if you are familiar with it. Have someone in the family, by custom usually named John, carry the candle and precede the priest into the rooms or areas you wish blessed. Do not be offended if the priest and person accompanying him refuse the cup of coffee or tea which you offer them; they may have a tight schedule to follow.

BLESSING OF THE WATER

At the Blessing of the Water, the primary thing to focus on is the significance of Christ's baptism for our lives and salvation "...that all who draw from it and partake of it may have it for the cleansing of their soul and body, for the healing of their passions, for the sanctification of their dwellings, and for every purpose that is expedient."

Let us thank God for this blessing.

CHRISMATION

In the sacrament of Chrismation we receive "the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit." (See Romans 8, I Corinthians 6, 11 Corinthians 1:21-22.) If baptism is our personal participation in Pascha - the death and resurrection of Christ; chrismation is our personal participation in Pentecost – the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The sacrament of chrismation, also called confirmation, is always done in the Orthodox Church together with baptism. Just as Pascha has no meaning for the world without Pentecost, so baptism has no meaning for the Christian without chrismation. In this understanding and practice, the Orthodox Church differs from the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches.

After the baptism and chrismation, the person newly-received into God's family is tonsured. The tonsure, which is the cutting of hair from the head in the sign of the cross, is the sign that the person completely offers himself to God–hair being the symbol of strength.

Chrismation, the gift of the Holy Spirit, is performed in the Orthodox Church by anointing all parts of the person's body with the special oil called holy chrism. This oil, also called myrrh (miron) is prepared by the bishops of the Church of Holy Thursday. It is used in chrismation to show that the gift of the Spirit was originally given to men through the apostles of Christ, whose formal successors in the world are the bishops of the Church. (See Acts 8:14; 19: 1-7.)

In chrismation a person is given the "power from on high" (Acts 1-2), the gift of the Spirit of God, in order to live the new life received in baptism.

SMART KID

Last year I bought my grandsons, Noah, 2, and Wyatt, 1, a "child friendly" Nativity set. When their mother noticed Noah had put Baby Jesus in the back of his little pickup truck, she asked, "Where are you taking Baby Jesus?" He replied, "I'm taking him to Wal-Mart."

Undique (from everywhere)

The Orthodox Church has the right doctrine and the true faith, but we lack the thunder, the fear, the love and the joy that should be reflected in our lives. Perhaps, this is why the awesome love of God so seldom shines in our lives.

Maximus, the confessor, says: Metanoia, repentance, the turning of the intellect and the heart, is as necessary for the Church as it is for each of its members.

Theophany comes from the Greek word "theophaneia," which means an appearance or showing of God. Even though God was revealed during the entire earthly life of Jesus, at His Baptism, we learn of the Three Persons of the Trinity, which emphasizes the significance of the divine event.

Make praying for others a part of family life. Keep an intercessory prayer list posted in a prominent place in your home. The refrigerator door is a good spot. You will be surprised how often your family members, including children, will remember to lift up those listed in prayer.

The iconastasis in the church is not a barrier, instead it reveals the invisible by hiding the visible.

In receiving holy communion, tell the priest your baptismal or church name. It takes precedence over the name you use in your everyday life.

Parishes may have slight differences in administration or customs. This depends on the heritage of the founding fathers.

It is interesting that holding lighted candles at memorial services is a tradition in the Orthodox Church. Now we see candles held or left at places where people have been killed, usually tragically.

We are all home-schooled as far as our religious knowledge and ethics are concerned. Our parents and other elders teach these by the way they conduct their lives.

Editor's Notes

A word we have been hearing frequently is change. We hear this in reference to our country, our society, and our church. What do we want in this change? The answers vary but they will not take place until we change first. Changed people produce change and here we will discuss it as it might affect the church.



Only if we change can we bring about change. The peace and the fulfillment we are all searching for in vain can only be found in a relationship to God that only Jesus can bring. "Peace I leave with you," He said. "My peace I give to you, not as the world gives do I give to you." (John 14:27). "Come to Me...and I will give you rest." (Matt 11:28). These are the promises of the Saviour who came not to judge the world but to save."

Jesus did not come to judge man because he was headed toward disaster. He came to save him, to point him in the direction of wholeness and peace through repentance. He came to save man because he was being pulled in opposite directions by his impulse.

He came to save him by expelling the many demons who had come to possess him, replacing them with the integrating presence of God. He came to save him by breaking the bonds of sin and death.

As St. Gregory of Nyssa tells us: "Our nature was sick and needed a doctor. Man had fallen and needed someone to raise him up." Jesus did not come to judge the world but to save it. But lest we forget one day He will come to judge the world. How will we meet Him? How will He find us? Will our part in the change in administration in the church reflect us following in the direction of wholeness and peace we can receive through repentance?

Many parishes this year are planning to have discussions on books that will prepare them for Pascha. Some of the titles which are being studied are: The Way of the Pilgrim, Father Arseny, Priest, Prisoner, Spiritual Father 1893-1973. There are many new books which would make good reading. Any priest should help you select one.

Don't forget Great Lent starts on March 2. Start using up the meat in your freezer and bring your diptich up to date. Give it to the priest before Feb. 21, the first Soul Saturday in the 2009 series.

You will be receiving two copies of The Orthodox Herald in close succession. We had experienced some difficulty in the production of this issue. It was just a little tick that affected so much.

Studying baptism this month, I have decided to add this from that service to my daily prayers. "The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom then shall I fear?"

Mir prosim.

Matushka Nina

FLIGHT OF TIME

Faster than a weaver's shuttle
Pass the days of this short life,
As we pace our destine courses
Through the spans of peace and
strife.

In his haste for earthly fortune
Man would linger overlong,
Deeming not that all the hours
To the Lord of life belong.

For everything there is a season,
All creation moves in time
To the metronome of Heaven,
With its impulses sublime.

If we listen we can hear it,
And we'll strive to keep in tune,
Happily to live our portion,
Biding late or leaving soon.

In each book of life the pages
Will the destined purpose meet;
Whether long or short the story
Every one will be complete.



I hope to provide meatless recipes this year. I will try to provide ethnic recipes but will share some other good ones. This month I am sharing a time-honored recipe as our contributor wrote: You have never heard of a soup like this. Within our church we have strict fast days (no meat or dairy products). This recipe was given to me by an 80-year-old man who had to cook for himself. My family loves it when I make it.

MUSHROOM SOUP

1 cup barley
2 potatoes
1 carrot
1 can lima or limagrand beans
1 1/2 cups mushrooms (wild or domestic)
1/2 cup sauerkraut juice
1 cup tomato juice
5 cups water

Mix and simmer for 1 hour.

In a skillet, make a roue (zaprashka).

1 onion
1 Tbls. flour
2 Tbls. oil

Stir constantly over medium heat until well browned. (Color of a brown grocery bag). Be sure not to burn. Add to the soup, which has cooked for one hour.

Brown 1 chopped onion in 2 Tbls. oil until translucent and add to soup. Simmer another 15 minutes.

NOTE: You may vary the vegetables. Use more or less potatoes, carrots, celery or add a handful of sauerkraut, yellow beans, little cut-up fresh cabbage or other vegetables.

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THEOPHANY MIRACLE AT JORDAN RIVER

Moscow, January 24 – Some five thousand pilgrims from various countries became witnesses to a sign that appeared on the holy River Jordan on the day of the Holy Theophany or Epiphany, a Russian newspaper reports.

Immediately after Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem performed the rite of the blessing of water, the Jordan boiled up and began to flow back, just as it happened after the baptism of Christ, the Zhizn (Life) daily writes.

Right after silver crosses were thrown into its calm waters after the prayer, the river boiled up. A maelstrom developed and the current flowed back for several minutes.

An ecstatic cry of five thousand people resounded over the Jewish desert. People refused to believe their own eyes, just as they did two thousand years when the Jordan turned its current after Jesus Christ entered its waters, the newspaper writes.

WHY NOT

A question was asked: Should relatives plant flowers on a dead person's grave?

Why not? Traditionally, flowers have been a symbol of resurrection. In laying flowers on a grave, Christians testify to their expectation of the resurrection of the body. No doubt, many who decorate graves do not think of this symbolism, but it is there.

Home Bible Reading Schedule

JANUARY 2009

1...Luke 6:12-19	16...Mark 9:33-41
2...Luke 6:17-23	17...Luke 14:1-11
3...Luke 5:17-26	**18...Luke 18:18-27**
4...Luke 14:16-24	19...Mark 9:42-10:1
5...Luke 20:27-44	20...Mark 10:2-12
6...Luke 21:12-29	21...Mark 10:11-16
7...Luke 21:5-11.20-24	22...Mark 10:17-27
	23...Mark 10:24-32
8...Luke 21:28-33	24...Luke 16:10-15
9...Luke 21:37-22:8	**25...Luke 18:35-43**
10...Luke 13:19-29	26...Mark 10:46-52
11...Luke 18:18-17:12-19	27...Mark 11:11-23
12...Mark 8:11-21	28...Mark 11:23-26
13...Mark 8:22-26	29...Mark 11:27-33
14...Mark 8:30-34	30...Mark 12:1-12
15...Mark 9:10-16	31...Luke 17:3-10

BIBLE STUDY

The readings vary in length, some are only a few verses long and then we find one like Luke 6:1-18. This has several themes which could be explored. The chapter begins by setting the time the gospel was written. It clearly gives the year and the ruler. We learn that Pilate was the governor and that the Messiah had come according to the prophecy that had been given in Genesis 49:10.

We learn that many people came forward to be baptized. St. John told them they had to repent first and, interestingly enough, he divided them into groups and had told them what their greatest faults were and what they had to correct. However, they must not use excuses for their behavior. They can't take credit for who they are. They can't ask: "Don't you know who I am?" In verse 10 they asked him: "What shall we do then?" First, he brings up the people who could help others but didn't. Charity to the poor was a besetting sin.

Then, he addresses the publicans. These were collectors of taxes for the Romans who were rulers at the time. These were of various ranks, but as a rule they did not have a very good reputation. In the pursuit of their work they had great opportunity of cheating the people by making them pay more than was due. Since there was small oversight, few of them withstood the temptation. St. John did not tell them to leave their job but to do their duty well in the state of life in which God had placed them.

Next, the soldiers were addressed. It's here that the advice is asked of a group. These were Jewish soldiers marching in Herod's army. They are advised not to be rough and violent nor to extort money or other things and to be content with their pay. It seems that they often brought false charges against anyone who had offended them or had refused their violent demands.

St. John then told them that he can only baptize them with water but He will come who will baptize them with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

It should be noted that this Scriptural teaching is adhered to in the Orthodox teaching. If a person must be baptized by a layperson the Baptism is continued by the priest at a later day.